

## our philosophy

While it would be impossible for us to fit all of the aspects of our philosophy and how we have learned from and explored these issues, the following points are ideas that we find essential to doing work around sexual assault:

- We strive to take an active role in our communities and to confront the deeper rooted causes of sexual assault.
- We strive to include and support anyone who has been targeted for sexual assault.
- We always believe survivors. We will always support survivors and ensure survivor autonomy.
- We work with perpetrators to recognize, understand and change behavior, not to punish them.
- We believe anyone can be assaulted.
- We understand that sexual assault is not solely contained within heterosexual and gender-normative relationships.
- We operate under strict confidentiality.
- We use the language of "survivors" and "perpetrators", understanding these terms are not universal for everyone but the most empowering we know.
- We recognize the interrelatedness of systems of oppression and work to confront them on all fronts.

We are always interested in feedback and ideas, so please feel free to contact us at [phillystandsup.safe@gmail.com](mailto:phillystandsup.safe@gmail.com)

Here are some resources, while they may not fall in line exactly with our methods or philosophy, we think do good work and you might find them helpful:

**supportny.org**  
(direct action, survivor support network)

**phillyspissed.net**  
(anti sexual assault & survivor support collective)

**incite-national .org**  
(women of color against violence - see: "color of violence: the incite anthology")

**woar.org**  
(women organized against rape - a nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing sexual violence)

**microcosmpublishing.com**  
(lots of zines including the "support" zine)

**mencanstorape.org**  
(a nonprofit that works with young men to create a culture free of violence)

## philly stands up

a collective working against sexual assault



[phillystandsup.safe@gmail.com](mailto:phillystandsup.safe@gmail.com)

### **Who we are:**

We are a collective committed to working against sexual assault. We formed in reaction to specific incidents of sexual assault in our community. We continue to exist as an avenue of support for the future as well as working on practical means to deal with sexual assault.

### **What we do:**

We are available as a resource for individuals and groups dealing with issues of sexual assault. We act as support for survivors and work to ensure that all of their needs are met. In our work with perpetrators we seek to recognize and change behavior, rather than ostracizing and allowing for continued assault. We also act to educate ourselves and others on issues in our society that contribute to sexual assault.

### **Why the stamp:**

This is the only stamp you will find. We do not offer a stamp of approval, there is no program. It is a continuous process that cannot be completed solely by a small collective. Rather than acting as a clearing house for perpetrators of sexual assault, we are much more interested in keeping a focus on this issue. It is much more productive to find ways to empower anyone dealing with this in their lives as individuals, loved ones, or a member of the community. Let's work together to learn from successes and failures of the past to find ways to heal from and prevent sexual assault.

We have found that much of what is out there in the world that addresses sexual assault is inadequate. The approach that we want to propagate involves the interconnectedness of oppression and deals with the deeper rooted causes of sexual assault. This involves investigating and expanding the definition of sexual assault as well as how we deal with it in our communities. We need to work across the entire spectrum and be proactive rather than only reactive.

**In this work it is imperative to remain accountable to the survivor and that their autonomy is upheld.** This entails prioritizing immediate concerns such as safety before engaging in more long term restorative work. It also means that all of our efforts are shaped by their needs and demands. The first and foremost goal is returning power to those from whom power has been taken.

Working with perpetrators of sexual assault is part of supporting survivors. The need to with perps is so that they do not assault again, perps need to be able to recognize behavior in order to break the cycle of violence. **We can assist perps in recognizing how their actions have hurt someone and help them work to change that behavior.** Running perps out of town (or simply cutting them off from a community) ignores the issue and places the perp in an unaccountable and anonymous situation possibly putting survivors and other communities at risk. We engage this work within our communities as the police and courts will often further perpetuate cycles of violence and re-traumatize survivors. Sexual assault runs across a spectrum and all issues should be heard even those that the police and courts don't recognize (i.e. "this person keeps rubbing up against me and generally creeps me out"). Working on all levels of support can stop sexual assault from escalating. Communication is key and having these hard conversations assists in building a culture of consent. Mainly, work with perps is important so that the responsibility does not fall on the survivors.

Many of the resources that exist on sexual assault don't work for us. We want to do work that reflects the needs of our communities and actualizes a world we want to see. **We want to smash the gender binary.** Our communities have lots of queer folks, many genders, and many different kinds of relationships. The rigid "men assault women" model that is perpetuated in most of the 'main stream' analyses of sexual assault doesn't help us or serve our needs, which are much more colorful and complicated. It is imperative that we honor the experiences of countless survivors who have been silenced by this constricted model. We are trying to de-construct these analyses and rebuild frameworks and discourses through the ways we actually work through specific situations of sexual assault and to create more resources to serve folks who don't live their lives in 2 gender binary boxes.

In working to eradicate sexual assault, **we must be actively engaged in creating a culture of consent.** Responsive, responsible communication should be a normal part of our daily lives and our sexual encounters. A culture of consent allows us to be proactive instead of waiting until sexual assault takes place to mobilize. An assault will damage entire communities and undermine important work we do together. Coming together to create a culture of consent is a way for communities to heal in the aftermath of sexual assault, as well as prevent future assault.

Words like "consent", "working on your shit", and "being accountable" are used a lot in working around these issues. We need to expand what these words mean. We need to define them through actions and the ways we interact and support one another. Every situation is its own so there are no hard fast rules, but we need to work to find what is best for the context. It is important to think about these things outside of the context of crisis. Ending sexual assault will not happen overnight, but our actions can lead to that end goal.